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SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION
AND THE BIBLE

EDNA F. LEE



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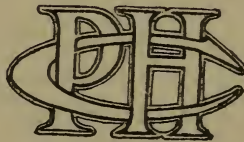


Spiritual Evolution and the Bible

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BY

Edna F. Lee



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Spiritual Evolution and the Bible

CHAPTER I.

“Ye are from beneath, I am from above,
Ye are of this world, I am not of this world.”

Is it true that the Bible refutes all arguments in favor of Evolution, and that, as some say, the Darwinian hypothesis is an obstacle to a belief in God and likewise in Christ as the Son of God? Because man perceives a little more of the magnitude of God's vast power and has a more definite idea of the meaning of infinity and eternity of time, does he reverence the creator of the universe and the author and finisher of his being the less? Does he fail to acknowledge God's rule in his life because all the laws of nature reveal His methods? Surely any advance in fathoming the mysteries of the universe should be enlightenment to man, even though he realizes that the forces and processes of the material world do not portray God's spirit but are merely manifestations of His power. We need not know the details of the theory of Evolution to believe in the general principle, for the world before us is saturated with proof of the struggle upward, and not only physically but spiritually.

The Darwinian hypothesis deals only

with the laws of physical life. The Bible gives us a wonderful view of similar laws applied to the spiritual realm, the soul of man, and when we get its vision we begin to grasp the meaning of eternal life or everlasting growth. The marvel is that the Bible does conform in every respect with our increasing knowledge, even though its formal utterances were worded by men who were limited by a more ignorant world. And that the world advances who can doubt? Remember it was but a few centuries ago that Galileo was imprisoned for declaring that the earth moved round the sun, such a view being deemed sacrilegious. Is there really anything in the Bible to confute this truth or our present theory of the stellar universe with its countless suns and their probable unseen planets? Is our modern speculation incompatible with a conception of eternal life or does it not rather strengthen our belief in conscious existence, perhaps forever and ever? The time may come again when, as in an earlier day, man will associate the heavens with his religion—when it will be impossible to gaze at this panorama of God's handiwork and to study the laws governing His mighty work and fail to see the author. To him who looks, even the heavens, tho of all matter upon which a pair of human eyes can focus the most static, declare an everlasting evolution of worlds.

Unless we admit spiritual evolution on

some basis, how can we assert that Christ is different from others who enter and leave the world? The scientific man of the future, and all who love truth, will have a satisfactory explanation for the divinity of Christ, in harmony with all known law, and this whether we believe that Christ's spirit came to this world from afar, as proof that spirit can transcend great space and is not confined to this world alone, and that He left it again to go where we can not follow now but will follow hereafter, perhaps when another world has been prepared for us; or whether we conceive Christ to be a spiritual product of a race of prophets, embodying all truth in himself, and surrendering all for the life of the world, as He returns to the Father as the first begotten Son of God, which belief might harmonize with the faith of long ago. Indeed would not any conceivable assumption of the human mind, with the assurance that we will some day be like Him, conform to a principle of evolutionary growth, slow process though it be?

Even though admitting the most extreme claim for the Divinity of Christ, we cannot "believe" on Him as the "Son of God" without realizing our own relationship to the Father. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Unless we recognize the spirit of God within ourselves, and as manifested in the "least of these His little ones" we surely

could not believe the Master's claims if He stood before us today.

The earliest followers of Christ, as the latest, have been impelled to concede that he was of a higher spiritual order than they, yet our logic often fails to convince because we have stressed the physical rather than the spiritual aspect of his birth and death, and have not grasped the laws of spiritual growth it was his mission to reveal. The Holy Ghost is spirit and does not conceive flesh, since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Christ's spirit came from the Father and returned to the Father. The Bible nowhere states that a mortal life follows the same direct course. Christ said: "No man hath ascended up to Heaven but He that came down from Heaven." "Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world." To His disciples He said: "Whither I go ye cannot come now but ye shall follow me afterward." And John the Baptist testified of Him: "He that cometh from above is above all * * * for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto Him." The spirit of God then is given to men by measure, as likewise implied by Christ's statement that "the law and the prophets were until John, since then the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it."

In fact, in all His message can we not

see that Christ presented a law of individual spiritual attainment on this planet and that all Bible prophecy conforms to it? There is little in the Bible about the life beyond this world but much about the glory of the life which all children of God are to share here. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, which Christ took such pains to impart as the Father's plan for the world, and the judgment of the world, which will disclose the attitude of every soul in his relationship to God and his fellow man, are clear doctrines when one ascertains that Christ expounded the law by which each individual soul may grow, through "natural selection" in the realm of spirit, step by step, even from one incarnation to another, until the world is ready for the great day of the kingdom. The law of the "survival of the fittest" in the physical realm may seem ruthless, but necessary to attain physical perfection. One similar, but applying to the spiritual domain, is clearly set forth in the word of old, whereby all souls who do not measure up to the standard set, must in some way be cast into a region of their own, that they may not longer retard the growth of those struggling upward.

To Adam, as to every man since, God gave a moral consciousness of responsibility when He endowed him with His own attributes of reason and will by which he was left to choose his course; yet his lower na-

ture conquered over his higher. Does not every man feel the urge of both past and future and fall short of attaining his highest ideal in one life term? When man first realized that he failed to reach the goal set for him, he attempted to appease an angry God by offering atonement in the form of sacrifices, but Christ's life and death set a different standard for overcoming human frailties. Christ brought God's demand for a greater sacrifice—ever the dearest of all possessions—man's individual, personal, present life, willingly surrendered that a higher might be evolved. "He that would find his life must lose it" is a law that may be truly applied to the spiritual or physical life, the individual or society en masse and has been demonstrated by the march of world events from the dawn of day for man, and will doubtless be the essential law for admission to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is true that all man made laws bind us to the past. When Paul says: "The strength of sin is the law" might he not have said: "The strength of sin is the past?" And is not this so because man is constantly growing? But the Bible promises that every restriction to spiritual freedom will be overcome here on earth and the time will come when love alone will fulfill the law. The Apocalypse prophesies that man will finally win what he lost in the Garden of Eden, and even have access to the tree of life.

The different conceptions of God expressed in the Old and the New Testaments surely reveal spiritual growth. Even the conception of Heaven changes with Christ's assurance that there will be a Kingdom of Heaven on this earth, so long despised as an inferior place of abode. Should not our idea of heaven be further enlarged from the ancient notion of a distant throne from which proceeds all rule and authority (and the Bible writers often used the word "heaven" as a symbol for power and authority) to the meaning Christ gave us of the Heaven Immanent, a spiritual realm on this planet within the soul of man himself?

Yes, it seems that all the message breathes Evolution, not growth toward physical perfection, though that is included, but the law of life by which we are born into the kingdom, and continue to grow by feeding on the manna sent from God to this hungry world. Let us not think we have exhausted the supply. Christ used the physical laws which His hearers could comprehend to explain the workings of God's spiritual laws and thereby revealed the striking similarity of all law. In his conversation with Nicodemus about being born again, we have found a spiritual truth doubtless applicable to the law of spirit, nevertheless, it seems that we might accept more literally than we have been wont to do Christ's words when he insisted that we must "be born

again," that we must be born into the kingdom of heaven, receive it "as a little child" "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He said He was speaking of earthly things when he stated, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one born of the spirit." Man has been able to fathom what in that day was a mystery of physical geography and it is not beyond reason to suppose that he may yet understand the law by which his spirit may leave one body and be resurrected in another. When the books are opened man may read not only one page at a time with no reference to that preceding and that following but the story of his soul growth through the ages. Christ says: "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed," and our belief in evolutionary growth gives us the assurance that all the beautiful Biblical promises will be fulfilled.

CHAPTER II.

“It is the spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”

Man craves an adequate and tangible answer to the question of soul life both now and after death. The orthodox church, in stressing the Kingdom of God in this world and in steering clear of the metaphysical, appears to have lost sight of the fact that man has an immortal soul. But that death does not end all, and indeed that birth is not the beginning of a soul's existence, has furnished the only satisfactory explanation of life to the children of men; though the varied forms of expressing the truth have been manifold, and each has become obsolete with the peculiar form of civilization which it typifies. To the age old question: “If a man die shall he live again?” we find the ancient answer: “He shall live and not die,” and an “everlasting yea” has been echoed in the soul of man ever since. The Old Testament is filled with the beautiful truth that we are living in eternity now and do not leave it. “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The world of spirit has ever eluded man's investigation, but in its final analysis the

physical world is likewise an unsolved mystery, yet man in his boldness has learned to understand its laws and powers, at least. Let us fear no knowledge, even experimental, which might lead to a more thorough realization of spiritual truth, but make bold to examine the soul of man and analyze it as we do other forces of nature. It would appear to-day that men are investigating everything in the universe excepting their own souls. The western civilization has been materialistic, with none of the metaphysical imaginings of the older eastern nations, but with Palestine, the mother of our religion, lying at the junction of the east and the west, the past and the future, holding in reserve all truth which had been discovered and prophesying that which was to come, we might hope for a larger vision to-day. While the influential world is in practice denying the existence of soul, even though some are advancing a theory of the non-existence of matter, wherein lies truth?

Is there anything in the Word of God or in the creation which is opened as a book before our eyes which would lead us to suppose that spirit long exists without its physical manifestation? Even the word which goes forth as a spirit must become flesh in order to live. Or what reason have we to doubt the reality of matter while accepting this dressing for the soul? It is just as unscientific to deny the existence of

one as it is of the other. True, we have reason to believe that spirit is creator, master, and nature but the effect, and a variable and fleeting circumstance. But spirit and form are inseparable. Neither can exist without the other. One is always cause and the other effect. Those who disclaim the existence of either in this universe might be likened to a man blind in one eye, who apparently sees as much as the rest of us, but whose vision is nevertheless limited. Man is a child of Mother Earth and Heavenly Father. The earthly seed must be impregnated with the spirit of God to form life. Every living and growing atom of matter on this terrestrial ball has been given its breath of life from the source of spirit.

We must be persuaded that the spirit is manifested only during life, its opportunity for growth. Death bears the fruit of life as a seed to be replanted. The body dies and "profiteth nothing" when the spirit leaves it; but the soul is "quickeneth," given new life, or is "born again," with another physical manifestation. Paul, evidently enlarging upon Christ's reference to the grain of wheat, explains to those early Christians who asked how the dead are raised and with what body they come "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," and said likewise that each seed is given a body of its own according to God's law. Both Christ and Paul make it clear

that what man calls death is merely a surrender to new life in other soil. The seed we may infer to be the spiritual fruit of the soul at death.

Christ touched upon the psychic similarity between death and sleep. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," and it appears that no record was given of his experiences during these four days in what some term the "spirit world." It was evidently oblivion to him as is perfect sleep to any of us, when body and soul have no apparent connection. Unless the wanderings of the soul make an impression on the brain, or physical machine of both soul and body and connecting link between them, there is no conscious existence. We can hardly doubt a spirit world, a cosmic consciousness or whatever we choose to call it, in which a soul may wander to regions afar when the objective mind is dormant, whether in what we call death, or in sleep, or when the mind is hypnotized, or even when awake but far from the body in spirit; but all communications must surely be received by mortal mind; and our dreams, visions, and apparitions are but an image made upon the brain of that which lies deep within our own immortal souls, which are not confined to time or space. Thus perhaps is prophesy explained as well as much which the psycho-analysts to-day might find within the soul but cannot explain by the present life.

We may suppose that when the body dies all memory of the past is lost with the death of mortal mind, and that the soul is obliged to make its impression on a new physical instrument. It is possible for God to bring the soul severed from the body back to the same habitation but this is not the law He has established in the world. He evidently deems it wiser to give it a fresh start in a new environment. Perhaps man's development could be marvellously hastened if individual life terms could be lengthened, for naturally some time must be lost with every new adjustment. The morning and evening of life send rays of light into the yesterday and the to-morrow, but at noon-day man is in his glory, in full possession of his powers.

May we not say there is centering in every personality a swarm of spirits, just as we admit that every body is composed of innumerable atoms? During life, the soul as the body, is undergoing a constant though almost imperceptible transition; but with death this swarm of spirits, or the soul they represent, leaves the body intact, and seeks a new home, an environment where conditions promise the kind of life for which it has a special affinity. We have never thought of looking for a law by which a soul seeks its own level in the vast world sphere, but if we should, we might find the words of Christ enlightening. His doctrine that those who kept his saying would never

see death might be confirmed scientific. Death is loss, life is growth. Though growth is from within outward, because dependent upon pre-existing conditions, it must be brought about by the embodiment of that which is external. When we have taken unto ourselves new spiritual concepts they become part of us by expression and manifestation in life. Christ called himself the bread sent from heaven whereof a man might eat and never die. Though spirits not called into action may lie dormant or in time be crowded out of consciousness by the influx of new spirits every soul keeps taking unto itself, yet the tendency must be to hold fast the truth once gained, to use it for nourishment and growth so that what is once acquired is never lost. Christ's prayers were most especially for them whom he said the Father had given him and to whom he said: "If ye continue in my word ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." So long as we hold fast each immortal truth the light of life brings us we continue in the way everlasting.

The universe is full of spirits, angels, messengers of God which we may entertain at will and "quicken" into life. Every word uttered, as every thought back of it and every act to which it leads, carries its own spirit which leaves its impress forever. "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof." Words are

indeed eternal, omnipotent, the power by which man creates and sends forth vibrations which might be likened unto the power whereby God created a world or a universe. If no atom of matter in the universe is ever lost, neither is one iota of force or spirit. All knowledge, all power, has been set into vibration by God, but man by his own initiative, involving infinite volitional effort, must reach and strive for every acquisition, and invariably sacrifice the old to gain the newer and higher blessing. Thus we may believe that though the natural body, the gift of physical life, is transmitted by heredity, the spirit itself, the sub-conscious and subjective mind, finds its abode by a transmission of spirit; and through the laws of growth, both the physical and spiritual life may be transmuted to a higher plane of life. Thus do these laws, each having a specific function of its own, contribute to the evolution of soul as of body.

Christ used these natural and universal laws to illustrate the Fathers plan for world evolution and the final establishment of the Kingdom. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son of Man quickeneth whom he will;" and he said likewise that the Father "hath given him authority to execute judgment also." The judgment day in which the sheep will be separated from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the just from the unjust, could be

ushered in at any time and every man by his attitude toward his fellow man, his mark in the forehead revealing his relation to God the Father and Christ his Son, would lay bare his soul since time immemorial, and the world would be judged, past as well as present. When the new kingdom is established, by God's law only those prepared for it can enter, or be "born" into it. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

CHAPTER III.

“Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.”

The body and the soul are distinct entities, each having its separate source and destiny. Since time immemorial man has held this faith, the Bible confirms it from cover to cover, and Christ states the fact with positive assurance and proves it by his life. Because spiritual things must be spiritually discerned and it has been the consensus of opinion in all ages and in all states of civilization, in every century and nation whose records have been turned to history, that man is immortal, is it not certain proof of the existence of the spirit within the house that it discerns this truth for itself?

Christ undoubtedly knew the whence and whither of the soul, but he seems to have expected that much of the truth should have been understood by students of the ancient law. To Nicodemus he said: “Art thou a master of Israel and knoweth not these things?” Mayhap primitive man, though indeed seeing through a glass darker than ours, perceived in his own childish way a self-evident truth from the God of nature which civilized man has forgotten.

One wonders whether historical Christianity, which has depended for its life upon

the institutions of the material world, has deflected from the original meaning of the word. Do we preach the doctrine of the soul as the great Teacher presented it, or has the leaven of the Pharisees, of which Christ warned, usurped the place of the leaven of God in the soul, since the soul of man has never had prior right in this world? That we do not spiritually discern all that Christ teaches of this subject is evident from the inefficacy of the Church's interpretation to-day. Christ said: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." The disciples were admittedly puzzled over the question of the future life, and when the prince of this world came, man must have lost his way in the darkness and does not yet see "whither" he is going.

The Pharisees and Sadducees, or the parties of conservatism and radicalism, are as old as history—one holding stubbornly to the old when all reason for its existence is past, the other attempting to break down false barriers and innovating, not the perfect, but a new ideal, only partially true, the dross of which must later be discarded. Every individual, as every state and nation, has within its own province these warring and antagonistic elements, disputing the possession of its territory. The iconoclasts

are the pioneers who clear the field so that better building is possible, and the fact that in proclaiming unpopular truth they are willing martyrs is evidence that the human being is greater than his physical existence. The law protects while it binds us all and it is to every man's temporal interest to accept his fate with its present security rather than to struggle for an uncertain liberty. But Christ said: "He that would find his life must lose it," and there have always been those divinely inspired to make the sacrifice.

Conservatism has ever held the fort and can defend itself against all attacks, while reform must gather its forces slowly and painfully, but if its motives are true it is sure to win. To-day's innovation becomes to-morrow's conservation, and all that is just in one order is bound to be the foundation of the next. Christ did not condemn the law of the Pharisees, but their own spiritual blindness, due to selfish interests, which led them to hold the letter of the law without the spirit which would lead to new truth. It was the Pharisees who should have known Christ since they professed all knowledge of the Father; and it was their hypocrisy, not their ignorance, which condemned them, for Christ said: "Every man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me."

The utterances of Christ are not arbitrary, but are in perfect accord with the

absolute basic principles of existence. His teachings are highly systematic, scientific, and psychologically true. He who fears that the light of science will conflict with religious truth lacks faith in the principles upon which his religion is based. Faith is not blind, but is built upon a fast and enduring intellectual belief in known law; and it is necessary for each individual and for every age to have a faith based on a revelation of its own and not on the tradition of the past. Instead of attempting to adjust old beliefs to the ever advancing world of known fact, certain phases of religious belief which an ignorant world accepted have been thrust on a more enlightened people, while some highly scientific truths clearly set forth by Christ have been ignored.

Science, philosophy and religion are man's best attempts to explore the ultimate facts of existence and to explain the divine truths of God as manifested in His universe. They should be so linked in unity as to produce a perfect system, and there can be no convincing reason for accepting any of their claims which does not contribute to the whole realm of knowledge. If the truth without flaw or deficiency could be known, it would doubtless be seen that the claims of science and religion do not conflict, but that the precepts which Christ gave are unchangeable, immutable, perfect laws of God so expressed that

no dogma or set formula conceived by growing spirits can long hold them.

When we lose our timidity about exploring the domain of the soul we may discover that ethics and morality are exact sciences and bear logical scrutiny as well as the laws of the material world. We may discover cause and effect in the spiritual realm just as we have of unseen physical forces like magnetism, electricity, and radium, the real properties of which scientists find it difficult to define.

All our knowledge, including our religion, is merely experimental. Perhaps every faith from time immemorial has contained some grain of truth, but with inspection we find that the words of Christ hold all spiritual truth, from the fundamental doctrine of the re-incarnation of the soul on this earth, which was prevalent in the childhood of the race, likewise the hope of a world beyond this for those who "endure unto the end" here, to the newest doctrines of our day expressed in Christian Science and kindred thought stressing the Immanence of God.

Mrs. Eddy writes: "The basic error is mortal mind." It seems this might be more simply and correctly stated "The basic error is in mortal mind." Neither mortal mind nor the physical body is to be condemned, since both are gifts of God with a divine purpose and use. Evil in mortal mind is doubtless a negative state of thought which,

as ignorance may be replaced by knowledge, will likewise disappear with spiritual growth and divine intelligence. The good old book as well as Mrs. Eddy teaches that only good is absolute and final, and that as error is cast out perfection takes its place. Or perhaps the truth is better stated vica-versa. Christ said: "Nothing from without a man can defile a man." Evil must exist in mortal mind to be sin. Poor environment gives opportunity for the expression of the evil tendencies within, and so keeps them alive; but if they have already been eradicated, or if we will to ignore them, environment cannot influence us for ill. A perfect environment however, would finally replace all evil with good.

Christ's word conforms with all Bible prophecy in predicting the perfection of man on earth, and while the soul of man has proven its worth by longing for a nobler sphere of endeavor, the time must surely come when it will be seen that man must win for himself the conditions which can make this world a paradise. This process may seem slow and laborious, and God's timepiece too high for our vision, but we may possess our souls in peace and patience so long as we know we are on the upward way. Let us keep Christ's love and toleration, which was not for evil and error, but for our brother groping his way through

the darkness in his search for the stairway to heaven.

Should not soul growth be the end and aim of life? "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

CHAPTER IV.

“I came that ye, having life, might have it more abundantly.” “To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.”

In history, as in nature and every expression of life, we see an unending repetition of laws as exact as those of science. The Bible in prophesying the destruction of the Jewish nation and explaining the causes, thereby foretold the history of every nation since, and even pointed out the similarity between that event and those latter days when all that had been prophecied should be fulfilled, when God's kingdom should be established on earth, and all principalities and powers would yield to the spirit of God in Christ. Though Israel as a nation was punished and lost to the further making of history, she was the mother spiritually of all Christendom and we have no doubt will yet fulfill the prophecy that “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Much is foretold of “the House of Israel” that is yet to come to pass, and in spite of the dark hour before the dawn those who look may catch faint glimmering streaks of light upon the horizon.

As the spirit creates its physical manifestation, so every achievement in the mate-

rial and historical world has first been born in the soul of man. Before it was proven that the world was round, man dreamed or conceived it to be so, and in attempting to verify his faith found a new world. Our prayers are not answered before they are expressed. Was not Christ sent to that nation which for centuries had prayed the Father for a deliverer, with faith believing this in His power to grant? That God sent His son according to His own laws instead of in compliance with worldly standards made it difficult for these people to see that he was an answer to their own prayers. Our prayers, our strivings and longings are gratified, but always according to God's law, and it is only when our will is His will that we can recognize the answer. We must acknowledge the superiority of His will and desire what is in accord with it to receive what is best for us. God never super-imposes His will on us and is too wise to force development. When God respects our weak human wills to this extent how much more should we esteem each other's. He apparently does not wish us to domineer any other intelligence any more than He expects us to surrender our own mental control to another except consciously and willingly. Thus are we all products of our own volition.

Nevertheless God works through human instrumentalities and by recognizing the superiority of His will the human may be-

come the medium of the divine, and in harmony with the Divine plan. In thus allowing God to work through us, we may ask what we will and it shall be granted us. Yes, the prayer of faith is a force and a power, if only because we embody our ideals and cause to bring about the realization of our own desires. If all who have prayed "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" had prayed in spirit and in truth, the millennium or world wide kingdom would have been in sight long ago. Though we build slowly and all prayers are not answered in one life term let us beware of our prayers, our hopes, our strivings. There are no accidents; everything that comes into life is from the Father in exact obedience to the laws that govern our existence. God is just and everyone gets his just deserts and finally the heaven or hell to which his own choice has led him. Paul says: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and Christ: "With what measure ye meet it shall be measured to you again." The law of compensation is as exact as the law of gravity.

Every step up has one below it and only by stepping firmly on one are we in position for the next. Christ came to the people whose fundamental knowledge of the Father was sound, yet it was only those individuals who had in them the spiritual fruits of the old law who were chosen as special soil for

the new germ of life. Perhaps this is the reason why Christ wished his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem and to teach the Jews first and afterwards the Gentiles. There were still some of the ancient saints who had not heard the message— Paul, the Moses of the law, was reached later we remember.

The New Testament presents an esoteric Christianity. Christ did not think of asking the Father to change the immutable laws by which He governs the universe, nor of accusing Him as some men do, because this world is not a perfected creation, and they enjoying the fruits thereof. Christ referred many times to the fact that not all were capable of hearing his message. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." "If God were your Father ye would love me." "He that is of God heareth God's words." He speaks of giving eternal life to as many as the Father has given him, and in speaking of the sheep which know his voice he says: "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Also in John he says he manifested the Father unto the men which God gave him out of the world and prayed for them: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." We, no more than they, can accept Christ until we see God the creator of all. After acknowledging the all-

powerful transcendent God we are prepared for the higher conception of God Immanent in Christ and in us.

We see that the doctrine of predestination has its root in the words of Christ, laying the foundation for the now old-fashioned belief that the ills of life as well as the good are visitations of providence. After all, man merely changes his forms of expressing unchangeable truths. Our newer cults will tell us that we have no enemies and that there is no evil, but that all men and all circumstances are but our teachers, which is doubtless true—when we put the right perspective on the thought.

It was a favorite opinion of the Christian fathers, as of the Jews and even the ancient heathen races, that every person is guarded by a particular angel who directs and controls his acts. We have not the same spiritual concepts to-day, but in our more practical and scientific terms may we not have in mind the same idea when we speak of the sub-conscious mind, which is more powerful than the conscious in directing our thoughts, feelings, and actions? This seems to be a particularly apt comparison if the term implies the composite soul, evolved from all past experiences. It is natural of course to live in the present. We spend little time in recalling even the most vivid scenes of our past life or those most vitally affecting us individually. In time they be-

come a part of our sub-conscious life as does much more that we have totally forgotten. Yet all that we have experienced is part of our being and predetermines our present existence, likewise our decision to-day affects our future. Just so may we believe that every soul is a product of its own particular experiences since the beginning of time and contains its own possibilities of future development. Thus may be solved the mystery of individuality.

Christ gives us hope, and indeed a certain knowledge, of the integrity of each individual soul as an entity in the cosmic consciousness or universal mind of which the psychologists to-day speak. When He said there were those before him who would never taste death till his coming again, may he not have meant that these souls would hold the distinguishing characteristics which make them what they are—that while they might add new spiritual elements, the old would not be lost? If we knew enough, we could likely state with as much assurance as Christ that “before Abraham was,” or any specialized character bound to time and place, “I am.” After his assertion that “God is not the God of the dead but of the living” perhaps we could find a more literal meaning than the theologians have given us for the statement that Abraham saw his day and was glad. He certainly stated clearly enough for all to comprehend that those before him

would be in the world when the kingdom on earth should be established, and that after his message had been carried to the uttermost parts of the world and all had heard the truth, there would be a universal judgment day. Practically all his parables deal with the ushering in of the kingdom as of vital and personal interest to those before him.

While we are taught that of those to whom much is given shall much be required, we are also told, according to the parable of the laborers, that those who worked in the vineyard the last hour only receive the same reward as those bearing the heat and burden of the day; also that some of the last shall be first. Many may have been growing, expanding, needing but the vital touch of truth in Christ, which if accepted in time will cause them to choose the side of righteousness in that great day of decision. For we cannot doubt but that our individual choice will decide our fate, that our subconscious and subjective minds will reveal our attitude toward the new kingdom. Each soul will be weighed in the balance to see on which side he belongs. Before the establishment of the kingdom the evil in the world outweighs the good, but when the world has taken unto itself enough of good, of knowledge, of God's wisdom and of Christ's spirit to swing the balance the other

way, the change will be sudden and the world transformed.

“Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.” “Blessed is that servant whom His Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” “Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.”

CHAPTER V.

“Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”

Man is an epitome of the universe, a little world, with a three-fold nature corresponding to the triune nature of God himself. Each individual is endowed with a governing power, a conscious mind and will of its own, expressing itself on a spiritual and physical plane.

Christ proved to the world that the Father could manifest himself as life perfected on earth. He, representing the coming race, is a model of what redeemed humanity shall be when, by substituting the higher for the lower, it shall have incarnated the whole spirit of God as He expresses himself in this world; and when, conscious of its spiritual unity and its inheritance as children all of one Father, the spirit of God in man shall have triumphed over the spirit of evil, the centrifugal forces shall have superseded the centripetal, so that love of others shall replace love of self.

We do not expect to attain individual perfection immediately; we judge we will need untold ages of active life on earth and perhaps beyond, learning lessons, acquiring knowledge, developing spiritual powers undreamed of, before we reach this goal and

become perfect even as the "Father in Heaven is perfect;" but Christ proclaimed a new era at hand, whenever we are willing to take up the cross and follow his guidance, when we shall truly take His "yoke" upon us and learn of Him. We shall not attain this heaven on earth until we sacrifice the old life and free ourselves from its chains, and surely the teaching is clear that this sacrifice will be demanded of every one individually in order to enter the new kingdom.

The Heaven proclaimed by the prophets of old and by Christ is to be realized on this earth, by the incarnation of God's spirit in the souls of men; but evidently the Father does not plan to give us the kingdom until we are of age and able to govern ourselves with justice and equity. The spiritual kingdom will usher in the material, for there can be no heaven without until it is within, with all capacities expanded for its appreciation and enjoyment. We apprehend that each individual must travel far before reaching even the present circumference of knowledge, and may well believe that heaven itself will grow with our increasing capacity to hold and manifest life.

The fact that we know better than we do, and always have heights ahead to which we aspire, is a promise in itself of infinite future possibilities and of the approximate attainment of the present ideal in spite of the limitations and restrictions preventing its

fulfillment now. While all are conscious of tendencies within which we would outgrow, and of limitations without from which we would be free, perhaps there is no one but feels within himself possibilities beyond the power of expressing in a life time. The progress of the world has been dependent upon man's persistent desire to be better and to do better, and we need not fear that the removal of an external system of competition will dim this high and holy aspiration, which if more intelligently encouraged might bring to immediate fruition the divine possibilities latent in each soul, and further the ultimate aim of all attainment—perfection. Only by looking for the divine spark within can we follow the light which will lead from glory to glory.

We shall have to discover the spiritual potentialities within ourselves and reverence our own soul's vision as superior to the traditional and theoretical dogma of another day. When we apprehend that success can be measured only by the soul's growth we shall be willing to reject the motives and ambitions of the past to attain this "pearl of great price"—this spiritual and material world of harmony and beauty and purity. We are to-day demonstrating the fact that selfishness is suicidal, that the only solution of the world's problems lies in a new nature and a changed motive, actuated and materialized. When human beings shall in truth

be inspired by the Holy Ghost they will not be troubled about the relative value of traditional faiths or beliefs, rituals, creeds, or dogmas. While ceremonial worship has been sanctioned in days when men were unwilling to trust their own knowledge of God, and needed the material proof of His existence as revealed to them through the eyes of seers and prophets, yet by gradually learning to see through their own eyes, they will be ready finally to worship "in spirit and in truth." John visioned the city with "no temple therein." The knowledge of God's spiritual presence will be sufficient.

If those who claim to be animated by the spirit of Christ to-day cannot seal their unity and spiritual reality as children of one Father, how can they expect to influence a distracted world in its search for international peace and harmony? However we believe the denominational screen set up in the past and separating those who would fain be united to-day will be removed. We already feel the urge toward spiritual unity and have faith in its materialization. By reuniting in true catholicity of spirit the severed body of Christ and acknowledging Him only as its head, it might yet be possible for the church of God to fulfill its mission in a day when the world needs a performance as well as a precept. With open eyes we cannot fail to see that Christ's message is practical and socialistic as well as individual-

istic. By practicing the charity we recognize as an outstanding virtue of our religion, it would be possible to effect a spiritual unity and harmony, expressed as co-operation on a vast scale, while acknowledging personal freedom and diversity of talent. "For the body is not one member, but many. Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

We are bidden to make disciples of the nations, and the world kingdom promised is a government binding all in love. Though the old writers looked forward to this day of the fulfillment of prophecy as the goal of life, there is nothing in the word nor in our knowledge of God's ways which would indicate that the millennium is the ultimate "end of the world" for man. It is merely acquiring the inheritance anticipated from the beginning. Christ said it was the "Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom," and it appears that His mission was most especially to show us the way to its attainment. It is to be assumed that man himself will have to set the kingdom in order, and well may we believe it will take a thousand years to do so; but as he will have reached his majority and been educated and trained for this destiny through the ages, we cannot but believe he will be ready to meet his every obligation with wonderful resourcefulness. One might suppose that composite man today, with his God-given powers and his

genius for organization would be equal to the task. Certainly he will be when greed and selfishness are eliminated. This, however, will be labor causing such travail as the world has never known.

Nevertheless the day of miracles is not past. One of the most sublime changes in nature is that by which the gorgeous butterfly is evolved from an imprisoned chrysalis. By just such a sudden transformation may the darkened world, when it holds the spiritual kingdom potentially, break the shackles which bind it and find joyful freedom in God's sunlight. When the world metamorphosis is complete and we breathe the free air of that day, we shall find that we had been living in dark ages indeed.

The glories of that time, when there will be "no sorrow nor crying nor any more pain," when the "former things are passed away" and He that sits on the throne shall say: "Behold I make all things new" is even now beyond our wildest dreams. But let us remember that these are all earthly promises. The latest revelation given us in the Apocalypse is surely of this material world as it shall be when "the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor" into the new city, for even the meek to inherit; though we are told that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie."

Yes, the material advantages will accompany the spiritual reality. Every truth discovered through the ages, every advance of science with its application to man's needs will contribute to the splendor of that life. Earth's resources will be developed further for the betterment of man's physical condition with the accompanying enlargement and enrichment of his immortal soul. The object of existence will be soul development and every phase of life will assist in a realization of this ideal. Physical life will be sustained without "thought for the morrow" for by living each day in its fullness we shall be preparing for the morrow.

Christ said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all these things shall be added unto you." Let us pray: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth."

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